

Accolades

There is strong collaboration between the program and the PEAB: the program frequently seeks and uses PEAB feedback and the PEAB clearly feels ownership of the program and takes initiative to offer suggestions regarding items of importance.

Recommendations

The program should clearly articulate the learner expectations for the Pre-Assessment and Culminating Seminars, including how candidates will be assessed for positive impact on student learning for program completion.

The Professional Certificate program should conduct a thorough review of their instructional design and delivery to ensure compliance with state requirements as well as the individualized needs of candidates. To that end, the program should review the following:

- Pre-Assessment Seminar, to ensure adequate time and structure for thorough self-assessment and reflection using the Descriptions of Practice in order to develop professional growth plans in line with state expectations.
- The Core, to allow for a wider range of professional development options for candidates thereby creating stronger alignment to the individualized professional growth plans.

STANDARD I: PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD

PEAB Involvement

The PEAB serves as the advisory board for the Professional Certificate program and has had regular updates and input since the program's inception in 2002, as observed in the Board's minutes. The Board has received informal updates on the numbers and status of candidates on an annual basis. Both minutes and interviews with PEAB members indicate that the Board has had regular opportunities to give input and make recommendations regarding the program. Members report a greatly increased flow of information since the hiring of the new Program Administrator in the fall of 2006, and they feel that their recommendations have been addressed. The PEAB expressed early concerns about the nature and intensity of the program, which were perceived to be causing candidates to choose programs at competing institutions. They feel that the current Program Administrator and Co-Chairs have been very receptive to their suggestions and have incorporated appropriate changes into the new program. They are interested in receiving data, both quantitative and qualitative, on the impact of these changes over time.

Recommended rating: Met

STANDARD II: ACCOUNTABILITY

Administration

The Professional Certificate program at Eastern Washington University is administered within the Department of Education Graduate Programs. The program was led by one program administrator from the development and proposal stage through Spring 2006. In fall 2006, the Interim Dean of the College of Education and Human Development authorized the Education Co-Chairs to hire an interim team of three retired administrators to lead the transition period. Their role was to investigate possible program options and potential leadership. In October 2006, the program officially hired a new Program Administrator. This individual has extensive K12 experience as well as experience supervising student teachers and using the Performance-based Pedagogy Assessment (PPA). This Program Administrator worked closely with the Education Co-Chairs to re-design the Pre-Assessment Seminar and recruit candidates. She used the Professional Certificate Handbook and other OSPI resources to aid in the design and has attended all OSPI Program Administrator Meetings. Prior to this point, the only connection to state documents was the use of the twelve criteria. According to interviews, the new Program Administrator displays enthusiasm and dedication to the program and to supporting new teachers. In addition, interviews indicate that communication and guidance have significantly improved over the last several months. One facilitator commented that the new administration and good leadership is the greatest strength of the program while another described the program as being more “tightened up.” Overall candidates, facilitators, and other faculty spoke highly of the leadership, support, and encouragement from the administration. Evidence shows that interest in the Eastern Washington University program has increased significantly over the last few months due, in large part, to these efforts. The Professional Certificate program has also been included in the College of Education’s new Strategic Plan.

Recommended rating: Met

Assessment

The program has outlined an assessment system with eight data points from program entry through program completion. Included in these steps are evaluation of candidate evidence and completer surveys. However, there is not a clear set of learner expectations for each step, nor a description of how those expectations are assessed. Surveys and course evaluations were not available as they have not been implemented in this new system. Some surveys were conducted under the previous director that led to program changes. The program continues to use the twelve criteria to assess candidate evidence rather than the At Standard statements in the Descriptions of Practice. Due to this gap, the degree to which positive impact on student learning is assessed is not clear. The program should take steps to ensure facilitators are well prepared to assess candidate evidence using this document as well as the Qualities of Evidence.

Recommended rating: Unmet

STANDARD III: RESOURCES

Personnel

The program personnel include the Program Administrator, a cadre of facilitators, and two graduate faculty. The facilitators are all experienced educators and most have advanced degrees and/or National Board Certification. One facilitator is herself a Professional Certificate completer. The January 2007 Pre-Assessment Seminar was facilitated by the Program Administrator with support from one Education Chair. All facilitators were required to attend the Pre-Assessment Seminar. The program elected to require their attendance to enhance common understanding and continuity among all stages in the program. The new administration has outlined a facilitator job description to develop consistency and clarify expectations. There was still some confusion expressed by facilitators regarding assessment. The program is supported by the staff for the graduate programs, as well as the Certification Officer.

Recommended rating: Met

Financial and other resources

The program is fully supported as part of the Department of Education. All program expenses including program administrator, facilitator salaries, Core Action Research Project advisors, as well as travel expenses, and program materials are part of the overall program budget.

Recommended rating: Met

STANDARD IV: PROGRAM DESIGN

Admission criteria

Admission criteria are communicated to prospective candidates through informational meetings and printed materials. The state form 4421 is on file for all candidates, verifying appropriate employment and completion of provisional status or support from the employing school district for the candidate's admission into the Professional Certification program. We suggest that use of a program application prior to enrollment in the Pre-Assessment Seminar would be helpful in verifying eligibility before collecting tuition fees from a candidate who might later be determined to be ineligible for the program.

Recommend rating: Met

Instructional design and delivery

The Professional Certificate program is offered through the Department of Education, Graduate Programs Office. Options exist for candidates to take Professional Certification by itself or in combination with a Master's degree in curriculum and instruction. The following courses make up the 15-credit Pro Cert program:

- Pre-Assessment Seminar (4 credits)
- Educational Research (4 credits)
- Action Research (4 credits)
- Culminating Seminar (3 credits)

In addition to these, candidates may enroll in Independent Study for 1-12 credits to receive credit for work required to develop the final portfolio. Candidates are currently encouraged to complete the entire process in one year.

Recent instability in university staff has caused confusion, and has resulted in some lack of confidence in the Pro Cert program. There is currently an effort to reach out to surrounding districts and to align university resources to district professional development needs through the Pro Cert program. Meetings with district officials and potential candidates indicate a fast-growing need for access to Pro Cert programs in the region and renewed interest in the EWU program.

Pre-Assessment Seminar

The original program (2002-06) was a 2-year program, with the Pre-Assessment Seminar taking place in year one and the research component and portfolio development in year two. Facilitators were hired to work with candidates in small groups, in their own schools or close proximity. The facilitators were National Board Certified teachers or district mentor teachers. This practice has continued in the re-designed program, and appears to provide a sense of valuable support to candidates. Facilitators attend all sessions of the Pre-Assessment Seminar with the candidates, but have no additional training with regard to course expectations or final products. The Pre-Assessment is delivered on three consecutive Saturdays to allow access by candidates who could not otherwise participate during the week.

Whereas candidate and facilitator interviews indicate that the expectations lacked clarity in the former program, most felt that the new program is making strides in that area. There are, however, concerns that expectations are still somewhat unclear, and the current 3-meeting format for the Pre-Assessment Seminar does not allow enough time for in-depth understanding of the Descriptions of Practice. A facilitator expressed a wish for more Pre-Assessment Seminar meetings throughout the year. State documents are introduced, but much time is spent answering questions regarding program expectations. Self-analysis and reflection are left to the individual candidate's inclination to spend time on this outside of the seminar, and result more from the guidance of the state documents than from the program itself. Interviewees expressed that a succinct outline of the final product of the program is needed.

Examination of professional growth plans developed by candidates during the Pre-Assessment Seminar showed inconsistent understanding of the purpose of this key product of course. Specifically, candidates did not consistently determine what students will be able to

do that they are not currently able to do (Step 1b), new skills and knowledge that will be required of the candidate (Step 2), and specific growth activities (Step 3) that should include, to a greater degree, personal professional development such as participation in in-service, courses, workshops, professional reading, observations, etc., that engage the candidate in obtaining new learning. Instead, many of the professional growth plans listed steps in designing curriculum, which may include elements of new learning but do not necessarily extend beyond regular lesson planning to actually stretch the candidate's current knowledge and skills with regard to effective practice. We suggest that more time should be allotted to the Pre-Assessment to allow for increased guidance by the instructor and depth of exploration of the meaning and implications of the Descriptions of Practice and professional growth planning.

Professional Growth Teams consist of the appropriate members, including the candidate's assigned EWU facilitator who serves as the university representative. The degree of collaboration of the PGT and candidate varies. There are currently no materials or training opportunities to assist PGT members in understanding their role in the Professional Certification process and how they can help candidates meet the requirements. Everyone involved acknowledges that positive changes are occurring with the new program leadership, and this is an area that could be more fully developed in the future.

Core and Culminating Seminar

The program requires all candidates to take a 4-credit Educational Research course and a 4-credit Action Research course, which are rooted in the EWU Master's program. Some candidates may be allowed to waive the Educational Research course if they have completed or are involved in a master's program and have had a similar course at another institution. All are required to select one of their areas of professional growth on which to base an intensive action research project. The courses are taught by graduate faculty who have little contact with the Pro Cert program, but are growing in their understanding of its requirements. While the design of these two courses and the value of resulting projects are not in question, the requirement as a part of the professional certification process is. For candidates who are pursuing a MA, it is efficient to apply this credit in both MA and Pro Cert programs. However, for candidates not seeking a master's degree, the level and intensity of the research project is in excess of the intended workload and focus for professional certification. Focusing the entire core on this project, in fact, detracts from the ability of the candidates to individualize the core to meet their specific professional growth needs, as well as the intent that professional certification should be job-embedded. One interviewee related that it had been necessary to change the focus of the professional growth plan in order to accommodate the action research project, rendering it less valuable than it might have been. Another expressed that Pro Cert and the action research project still feel very separate. While completing these eight credits, candidates are working on gathering their evidence and completing their ProCert portfolio. While they can earn independent study credit for this work, the design creates an exceedingly heavy workload during the Core. Furthermore, the 8-credit core requirement may be one cause of the deficiencies noted

in the professional growth plans, where individualized professional development selections were not emphasized. We suggest a review of this requirement and consideration of allowing more individual flexibility in selecting coursework or professional growth activities for Core credits.

The design of the Culminating Seminar contains the required final documentation and evidence, completion of core activities, and presentation of the portfolio. Candidates who have not successfully completed a Culminating Seminar may receive a “Y” college assessment, which allows them to continue working on their final documentation for up to one year past the end of their seminar. There is no limit on the number of times a candidate may participate in the Culminating Seminar. At this time, there have been no Culminating Seminars offered, as the re-designed program just began in January of 2007 with its first Pre-Assessment Seminar. Under the previous administration, EWU assisted seven advanced track candidates. EWU has had no recent requests for an advanced track program, so there is currently no plan in place for this option, but they anticipate following the OSPI guidelines as provided in the Professional Certification Handbook.

Recommended rating: Unmet

STANDARD V: KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

From 2002-2004 candidates completed the products as designated by the state (CLIP, FIP, PIP etc). After 2004 the program designed four portfolio pieces for candidates to complete with the twelve criteria embedded within. One of the four components was the Action Research project from the Core courses. These projects showed use of data to make instructional decisions and in most cases were job-embedded and aligned to at least one criterion. However, during this time there was little or no attention to the Descriptions of Practice or the five qualities of evidence. This resulted in little evidence in student voice or explicit demonstration of impact on student learning. The cohort that began in January 2007 is using the state portfolio guidelines as they gather evidence and reflect on progress. In addition, the program has made improvements in the area of evidence as stated by a facilitator: “[the program administrator] has definitely upped the ante with student voice.”

Recommended Rating: Unmet